

National Science Foundation

Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program
Plan FY2012 - FY2014 (FY2013 Update)



Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Policy Statement	2
DVAAP Official.....	2
DVAAP Planning Process	3
Veteran and Disabled Veteran Assessment.....	4
Representation Assessment.....	4
Employment Targets	6
Recruitment Methods.....	8
Division of Human Resource Management	8
Veterans Employment Program.....	8
Office of Diversity and Inclusion	12
Building a Path to Future Hiring Success.....	13
Advancement Methods	14
Maintaining Program Awareness.....	16
Program Monitoring, Review, Evaluation.....	17

Policy Statement

Together with the rest of the Federal Government, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has an obligation to assist veterans, especially those individuals who, as a result of their military service, have lost opportunities to pursue education and training toward civilian careers. Of particular concern are

those veterans who were disabled during their service to our country or after separation from active duty. Therefore, it is the policy of NSF and the purpose of this Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Plan to ensure that disabled veterans, especially those who are 30 percent or more disabled, are considered for employment and advancement opportunities.

"For their service and sacrifice, warm words of thanks from a grateful nation are more than warranted, but they aren't nearly enough. We also owe our veterans the care they were promised and the benefits that they have earned. We have a sacred trust with those who wear the uniform of the United States of America. It's a commitment that begins at enlistment, and it must never end.

– President Barack Obama, March 19, 2009

NSF managers and supervisors are responsible for achieving the goals in this plan with the assistance and support of the Agency's Division of Human Resource Management (HRM). This plan covers all Directorates and Offices of NSF.

DVAAP Official

NSF's dedicated DVAAP Official, assigned overall responsibility for development and implementation of the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program Plan is:

Dr. Judith S. Sunley
Division Director, Human Resource Management



DVAAP Planning Process

This plan covers a two year period, FY2012 to FY2014, and will be revised annually. NSF will undertake a yearly review of the status of NSF employees who are disabled veterans. The Foundation will conduct this review at the end of each fiscal year, during the October – November timeframe, in conjunction with the annual DVAAP Accomplishment Report and Annual Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program Plan Certification. This particular iteration of the FY2012-FY2014 DVAAP Plan reflects an updated representation assessment and revised and expanded plans for FY2013.

**"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget
that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but
to live by them."**

– President John F. Kennedy



Veteran and Disabled Veteran Assessment

Representation Assessment

The representation assessment data provides a snapshot of the current status of NSF's veteran and disabled veteran workforce at the end of FY2012. The data highlights how NSF's workforce changed in terms of on-board staff, accessions, separations, and promotions from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012.*

Table 1: All Federal Employees and Veterans On-Board at NSF

ON-BOARD - FY2011 and FY2012 Comparison**				
Category	FY11	FY12	# Change	% Change
All Employees	1469	1474	+5	+0.03%
All Veterans	77	90	+13	+16.9%
<i>30% Disabled Veterans</i>	15	20	+5	+33.3%
<i>< 30% Disabled Veterans</i>	10	13	+3	+30.0%
<i>Non-Disabled Veterans</i>	52	57	+5	+9.61%

Between FY2011 and FY2012, NSF's overall staff population increased by 5 employees. During that same timeframe, the total number of veterans on-board increased by 13, or 17%. In FY2011, NSF employed 25 disabled veteran employees, making up 32.5% of the Foundation's veteran population. In FY2012, this number increased to 33 disabled veteran employees, making up 36.7% of the veteran population. NSF also increased the percentage of veterans (both disabled and non) in the overall workforce from 5.2% in FY2011 to 6.1% in FY2012.

Table 2: All Federal Employees and Veterans Added to NSF

ACCESSIONS - FY2011 and FY2012 Comparison**				
Category	FY11	FY12	# Change	% Change
All Employees	237	266	+29	+12.2%
All Veterans	9	22	+13	+144%
<i>30% Disabled Veterans</i>	4	10	+6	+150%
<i>< 30% Disabled Veterans</i>	1	4	+3	+300%
<i>Non-Disabled Veterans</i>	4	8	+4	+100%

In FY2012, NSF added far more veterans to the workforce than in FY2011, increasing accessions by 144%. In FY2012, veterans accessions made up 8.3% of all additions to the workforce and disabled veteran accessions made up 5.3% of all additions. A large portion of the additions were disabled veterans, with the highest percentage (10 out of 22) being 30% or more disabled, marking FY2012 as a great year for disabled veteran hiring at NSF.



Table 3: All Federal Employees and Veterans Separated from NSF

SEPARATIONS - FY2011 and FY2012 Comparison**				
Category	FY11	FY12	# Change	% Change
All Employees	259	254	-5	- 1.93%
All Veterans	8	10	+2	+ 25.0%
30% Disabled Veterans	3	5	+2	+ 66.7%
< 30% Disabled Veterans	0	1	+1	+ 100%
Non-Disabled Veterans	5	4	-1	- 20.0%

In FY2012, NSF saw a small decrease in the number of total employee separations from the Foundation. However, during that same timeframe, NSF experienced an increase (by 25%) in veteran and disabled veteran separations, with the largest numerical increase for 30% or more disabled veterans.

Table 4: All Federal Employees and Veterans Promoted at NSF

PROMOTIONS - FY2011 and FY2012 Comparison				
Category	FY11	FY12	# Change	% Change
All Employees	126	120	-6	- 4.76%
All Veterans	6	8	+2	+ 33.3%
30% Disabled Veterans	2	1	-1	- 50.0%
< 30% Disabled Veterans	0	1	+1	+ 100%
Non-Disabled Veterans	4	6	+2	+ 50.0%

NSF saw an increase in the number of total veterans receiving promotions in FY2011, while the agency as a whole promoted fewer people. In FY2011, veteran promotions made up 4.8% of all promotions and this number increased in FY2012, with veteran promotions making up 6.7% of all promotions at the Foundation.

*All data in Tables 1-4 were pulled from the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS) and include NSF's National Science Board (NSB) and Office of the Inspector General (OIG) employees.

** Onboard, Accession, and Separation data reflect a small number of year-over-year discrepancies due to anomalies including employee name changes and changes in veteran preference/status.



Employment Targets

The Council on Veterans Employment model prescribes veterans employment targets for agencies based on prior year data. NSF's FY2012 targets were 9.3% for veteran hires and 4.8% for disabled veteran hires, with both percentages taken relative to the total of all new hires. At the time the veterans employment model was established, NSF identified a few challenges the Foundation would face in reaching the prescribed targets. The Agency recognized that the use of all new hires as the denominator would be somewhat misleading for the Foundation, as only a small fraction of NSF's new hires are full-time permanent positions. Therefore, NSF also sets its own annual targets for the percentages of veteran and disabled veteran full-time permanent hires. The Foundation feels these latter targets are generally more meaningful in terms of NSF's internal recruitment strategies.

The tables below present NSF's progress against its veterans employment targets in FY2012. Table 5 represents all new hires to the Foundation, indicating the percentages of all new hires that were veterans and/or disabled veterans. Table 6 presents all accessions to the Foundation, indicating the percentages of all new hires and transfers to NSF that were veterans and/or disabled veterans.

Table 5: Veterans New Hires as a Percentage of all Employee New Hires

NSF Veterans New Hires FY2012			
	FY2012	Targets	Delta
All New Hires		<i>Council Targets</i>	
<i>Veterans</i>	6.0%	9.3%	- 3.3%
<i>Disabled Vets</i>	3.9%	4.8%	- 0.9%
FT Perm Hires		<i>NSF Targets</i>	
<i>Veterans</i>	14%	16.5%	- 2.5%
<i>Disabled Vets</i>	10%	9.7%	+ 0.3%

Table 6: Veterans Accessions as a Percentage of all Employee Accessions

NSF Veterans Accessions (New Hires and Transfers) FY2012			
	FY2012	Targets	Delta
All Accessions		<i>Council Targets</i>	
<i>Veterans</i>	8.3%	9.3%	- 1.0%
<i>Disabled Vets</i>	5.3%	4.8%	+ 0.5%
FT Perm Accessions		<i>NSF Targets</i>	
<i>Veterans</i>	18.1%	16.5%	+ 1.6%
<i>Disabled Vets</i>	12.1%	9.7%	+ 2.4%



Ultimately, NSF did not meet the Council targets for veteran hires established for FY2012, although it significantly increased hiring of veterans and disabled veterans relative to FY2011 numbers. Additionally, when looking at both new hires and transfers to the Agency, NSF fared very well against its targets, substantially exceeding three out of four.

NSF's new hire data shows that the Foundation continues to struggle with hiring veterans into a workforce that draws in large part from doctoral scientists and engineers with significant research experience, a pool with very small veteran participation rates. According to the American Community Survey Data collected in 2009, there are over 21.8 million veterans in the country today. About 1.3 million of those veterans have science and engineering bachelor's degrees, which make up roughly 6% of the veteran population. Only 16,000 veterans have the credentials to serve in NSF's scientific program management positions, constituting less than .1% of total veterans. This means that at NSF, where hard science degrees are necessary for many positions, the potential pool of veteran recruits is exceedingly small.

"There is still much work to be done. Hundreds of thousands of veterans across this great country remain out of work. But we're encouraged to see so many different people work toward a common goal – committed to helping veterans and military spouses find not just the jobs, but the careers they richly deserve."
– *Hiring our Heroes Program*
October 1, 2012

Regardless of these challenges, NSF is strongly committed to meeting the objectives of the Veterans Employment Initiative in a manner consistent with both NSF's workforce needs for mission accomplishment and the Agency's employment targets. NSF recognizes that it can continue to improve its recruitment and hiring efforts to increase the veteran population at the Foundation and these strategies are detailed on the following pages.



Recruitment Methods

NSF's veteran recruitment and outreach efforts span several divisions and programs including the Division of Human Resource Management (HRM), the Veterans Employment Program (VEP), and other offices at the Foundation. NSF's planned activities to recruit veterans are detailed below.

"America's commitments to its Veterans are bonds that are sacrosanct—a sacred trust we are honor bound to uphold."
– President Barack Obama

Division of Human Resource Management

As the primary recruitment organization at NSF, HRM will continue to ensure that a diverse group of employees, especially veterans, are hired for open positions. As part of this effort, HRM will:

- **Send regular job opportunity announcement updates:** NSF announces job announcements via email to subscribers of its "NSF Updates" email list.
- **Support diversity and inclusion:** HRM will support diversity and inclusion activities geared toward veterans and disabled veterans.

Veterans Employment Program

NSF's VEP Coordinator and program activities have contributed significantly to the veteran community at the Foundation. VEP will continue successful initiatives from the past year and implement new measures moving forward. More specifically, VEP will:

- **Maintain contact with organizations that provide services to veterans:** NSF has worked diligently to build relationships with organizations that serve veterans, especially those that connect veterans to employment opportunities. HRM will work to improve those relationships, increasing the Agency's regard among veterans. Examples of these may include Wounded Warrior programs, OPM's Vets 2 Feds Internship Program, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Veterans Administration, local military base transition assistance programs, and various veteran student associations.



- **Continue to partner with student veteran employment counselors:** HRM will continue its work with colleges and universities whose curricula are in alignment with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), as well as business and operations, to encourage veterans and disabled veterans to apply for NSF careers and student internships that relate to their qualifications.
- **Work to identify specific jobs that can be filled with veterans:** NSF will work to identify and set aside jobs that the Foundation can target for veteran hires moving forward, such as administrative, IT, logistics, and procurement positions.
- **Continue implementing programs and initiatives from the Veteran Employment Operational Plan (VEOP) established in 2010:** NSF has made significant strides in implementing the actions identified in the VEOP, which focuses on education, coordination, and collaboration within the NSF community, as well as external veteran employment stakeholders, to attract and recruit veterans. VEOP is an essential resource used by NSF to ensure the Agency is on track to hire, retain, and promote veterans, with a particular focus on disabled veterans. While NSF has initiated many of the activities proposed in the VEOP, the Foundation is committed to implementing remaining plan objectives, which are also infused and detailed throughout this DVAAP Plan. Because the VEOP has been so useful, NSF also plans to update its Operational Plan so that it can continue to function as an ongoing strategic planning tool.

The Four Focus Areas of NSF's VEOP

- 1) *Leadership Commitment*
- 2) *Skills Development and Employment*
- 3) *Marketing Veterans Employment*
- 4) *Information Gateway*

- **Schedule briefings with senior leaders and managers:** The VEP Coordinator will continue to brief hiring managers and consult with Divisions, Offices, and HRM's Service Teams to introduce veteran hiring benefits and additional information as well as to reinforce Agency veteran hiring goals.
- **Extend the Charter for the VEP Working Group and Expand Its Role:** The VEP Coordinator will extend the VEP Working Group charter (originally established in FY2011) and the group will continue to meet and release semi-annual reports detailing the status of its recommendations and information about the VEOP objectives. Additionally, the role of the VEP Working Group will be expanded to include more



program responsibilities, including review of the annual DVAAP reports, and will also review the charter for the group and make updates as needed.

➤ **Build relationships with other VEP Coordinators at various Federal agencies:**

The VEP Coordinator will continue to work together with veteran employment teams at other agencies, especially the Agency of International Development (USAID) and the Departments of Labor, Defense, and Homeland Security, to share ideas, successful strategies, and potential veteran hires from their databases.

➤ **Continue Participation in Veteran Candidate Pool Programs:** The VEP Coordinator will continue to coordinate with Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a new veterans-only resume database. Once the database is live, the VEP Coordinator will also announce the database to NSF hiring managers and supervisors.

➤ **Expand the Non-Paid Work Experience Program (NPWE):** NPWE has proven to be a highly effective and sought after way to incorporate veterans into the Foundation. NSF hiring officials have been eager to take part in the program. Therefore, NSF will expand use of the program and continue to transition successful participants into full-time jobs.

NSF implemented the Non-Paid Work Experience Program in FY2011. Since that time, 8 veterans have participated in the program and 4 have been brought on as full-time hires.

➤ **Continue the VEP Coordinator's Outreach Activities:**

- Career and resume counseling: The VEP Coordinator has historically counseled veterans on their careers and resumes to help improve their employment opportunities and will continue to do so going forward.
- NSF website career pages: The VEP Coordinator will recommend improvements to the NSF career webpages, especially those pages of specific interest to veterans.
- Targeted outreach and diversity promotion activities: VEP will continue and expand its efforts to attend career fairs, conferences, and recruitments events targeted toward veterans and disabled veterans. In addition, VEP will also include outreach to military transition organizations.
- Outreach to college and university career centers: VEP will continue to directly solicit veteran resumes from college and university career centers and will work to establish stronger relationships with their Veteran Education Offices.
- Develop testimony cards and event marketing materials: NSF will develop testimony cards featuring NSF veteran employees as well as other marketing

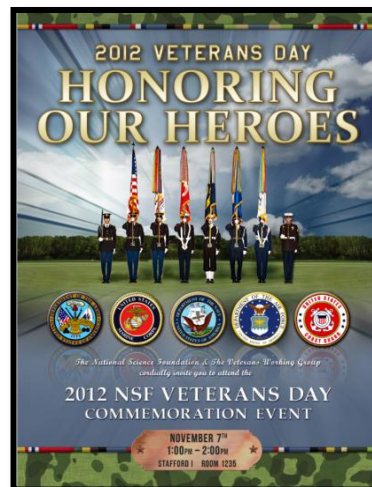


materials to be determined on an event-specific basis.

- Maximize career counseling opportunities for veterans through social network platforms: As discussed in OPM's *Government-Wide Veterans' Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan for FY2010 - FY2012*, VEP will interact with veterans using tools available on OPM and other Government websites as well as through other counseling resources within the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs. The VEP Coordinator will also continue his participation in the Vet-Net veteran group on LinkedIn and explore posting NSF information on websites for veterans and transitioning military personnel.

➤ **Continue to Increase Internal Awareness:**

- Spotlight successful veteran outreach efforts and activities on InsideNSF, the Announce Channel, and the Weekly Wire: NSF will continue its work to make employees more broadly aware of the efforts of HRM, VEP, ODI, and TIMO around veteran hiring. NSF will continue to post flyers, send email blasts, and announce events via NSF's *Announce Channel*. Depending on the Coordinator's availability, NSF will also continue its Veteran's Outreach Blog on the NSF Intranet where participants can discuss outreach events, programs at the NSF, and other veteran-specific content.
- Continue to recognize managers and supervisors whose recruitment and promotion efforts increase career opportunities for disabled veterans: NSF will continue to recognize supervisors who are champions for the NSF Veteran Employment Program. Activities currently include an annual announcement in the *Weekly Wire* and recognition at the annual NSF Veterans Day Commemoration Event. Going forward, VEP will work with the VEP Working Group to improve the champion nomination process and to increase engagement and visibility of the initiative.
- Memorial and Veterans Day Events: These well-attended events have provided recognition for veterans and have helped create a sense of inclusion and community at NSF. VEP will continue hosting these events on an annual basis to foster a positive atmosphere of recognition and inclusiveness for veterans.



- **Create More Paths to Veteran Hiring:** VEP will work with HRM to set aside more non-competitive positions for 30% or more disabled veterans and to explore additional use of veteran-related hiring authorities. VEP will also ensure that information about these hiring authorities is available via the NSF website and in NSF's recruiting materials. In addition, the VEP Coordinator will work within HRM, especially the Academy and Instructional Technology Office, to provide training on veteran hiring authorities to NSF's HR Specialists and HR Service Teams.
- **Continue to Promote Training for Veteran Hiring:** NSF has implemented mandatory online training for managers and HR professionals on veteran hiring in FY2012. VEP will continue its robust marketing campaign to increase awareness of this training with an eventual completion goal of 100%. VEP will also ensure accountability by tracking Agency progress throughout the year.
- **Maintain a 10-point veteran's preference register of applicants:** VEP will continue to grow and maintain the 10-point veteran's preference register and automatically refer applicants for consideration for appropriate position vacancies, even those potentially outside NSF.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) aims to help ensure that NSF is in compliance with the laws and regulations governing Federal-sector equal employment opportunity and civil rights, and also to foster a diverse and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity through policy development, workforce analyses, outreach, and education. Many of ODI's programs benefit the NSF disabled population, including disabled veterans, and help NSF provide an open and accommodating environment for recruiting veterans. Beyond working to provide accommodations to disabled veterans, ODI will continue to engage with veterans internally and externally through:

- **Ongoing internal NSF events:** ODI organizes events at NSF for National Disability Employment Awareness Month every October. ODI plans to continue putting informational displays around the building while also carrying out awareness events such as hosting speakers, running discussion groups, and planning activities to promote awareness and inclusiveness.
- **Targeted outreach events:** ODI staff will also continue to attend as many outreach



events as resources allow in the coming years, with a focus on recruiting high quality veteran candidates to NSF.

Building a Path to Future Hiring Success

To help equip veterans with the necessary qualifications to be successful at NSF, the Agency has pursued programs to begin developing a “pipeline” of candidates. While such programs may not always impact immediate NSF veteran hiring goals, they can be invaluable talent sources for NSF in the future. NSF plans to:

- **Begin staffing through Operation War Fighter (OWF):** OWF provides on-the-job training for veterans and would allow NSF to use OWF employees to help fill short-term vacancies such as those resulting from maternity/paternity care and reservist obligations. NSF will continue to recruit for this program to help staff temporary and NSF Library vacancies in the future.



Advancement Methods

NSF is committed to working with veterans to provide job counseling, training, mentoring, and other internal advancement opportunities once qualified veterans are hired. By providing these opportunities, NSF seeks to retain an engaged and dynamic veteran workforce to support mission goals into the future. The Foundation's goal between FY2012 and FY2014 is to create further advancement opportunities for veterans, recognizing the value and importance of ongoing development and representation at all levels of the Agency.

"We all benefit from retaining the dedication, leadership, skills, and abilities Veterans have honed in the fast-paced, dynamic environments of our Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard."

– John Berry, OPM Director

NSF plans to implement and/or continue using the following methods to improve participation and veteran advancement opportunities across the Foundation:

- **Continue NSF Academy training and marketing:** The Academy will provide a variety of learning resources to support and encourage competency development and professional growth for NSF's veterans. These opportunities include the Staff Engagement, Education and Development (SEED) initiative targeted toward administrative professionals as well as the After Hours Program. VEP and the Academy will also collaborate to market Academy benefits to veterans.
- **Partner with ODI to reduce barriers and ensure accessibility:** VEP will work to identify employment barriers for veterans with disabilities and will address those barriers by working closely with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). VEP will also work with ODI and other partners such as the Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program (CAP), the USDA TARGET Center, and the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) to ensure that disabled veterans have the necessary accommodations to work safely and comfortably at NSF.
- **Implement a workforce analysis:** As part of the VEOP, NSF identified a goal to perform a workforce analysis to assess the progress of veteran employees. NSF will implement this study by looking at veteran and disabled veteran workforce data and other qualitative data to inform necessary changes and improvements to help veteran employees succeed at NSF. NSF will also use this analysis to assess organizational readiness for greater employment of veterans.



- **Capture data from separating veterans:** As part of a larger NSF effort, VEP will help develop an exit survey or exit interview process to capture exit data from veterans who are leaving the Agency.
- **Provide cross training and developmental assignments:** NSF's managers will continue to provide all employees, including veterans who are interested and qualified, with opportunities for new cross training and developmental assignments.
- **Tailor Individual Development Plans (IDPs):** Supervisors will work with all employees, including Agency veterans and disabled veterans, to create targeted, effective IDPs to help promote internal advancement opportunities.
- **Expand mentoring opportunities for veterans:** In FY2012, the VEP Coordinator began collaborating with the NSF Academy lead on the NSF Mentoring Program to pair veteran mentors with veteran mentees in order to provide relevant, veteran-specific advice for employees. This pilot program has received very positive feedback and will be expanded in the coming years. The VEP Coordinator also plans to partner with the NSF Mentoring Program to hold an information session for current and potential veteran mentors and mentees.
- **Maintain the Veterans' Buddy Program:** VEP will continue and evaluate its pilot buddy program, designed to facilitate acclimation for veterans new to government civilian service.

"The Staff Engagement, Education and Development (SEED) Initiative empowers staff to develop careers that promote discovery and innovation and encourage professional growth, challenge, variety, and success."

– SEED Vision Statement



Maintaining Program Awareness

The following methods will be used to promote internal awareness of the Disabled Veteran Affirmative Action Program for both veterans and the larger NSF community. NSF hopes to continue implementing or initiate these activities based on the availability of resources:

- Continue to monitor the use of management directives on diversity with special emphasis on persons with disabilities in the NSF workplace, incorporating new awareness initiatives into existing activities.
- Continue promoting internal awareness activities, including hosting the highly successful Memorial and Veterans Day Commemoration Events, and publicly recognizing NSF managers who champion veterans. NSF will also include senior leadership participation in events.
- Incorporate a statement in supervisor and manager performance plans to keep them apprised of their responsibilities for furthering equal opportunity employment for underrepresented groups.
- Develop a veteran-specific information card to include in the New Employee Orientation (NEO) folders for all onboarding veterans. The card will outline NSF resources for training, mentoring, reasonable accommodations, and informal veteran activities.
- Initiate informal quarterly potlucks, hosted by the Veterans Employment Program, for both veterans and non-veterans to come together and discuss topics relevant to veterans in the NSF workforce.



Program Monitoring, Review, Evaluation

NSF monitors and reviews its progress in recruiting, hiring, and advancing veterans and disabled veterans through the annual development of the DVAAP Accomplishment Report and Plan. The DVAAP Accomplishment Report allows NSF's Veterans Employment Program to evaluate and report on the Agency's annual progress towards reaching the goals established in the DVAAP Plan. In addition to using the annual DVAAP tools as a means for evaluation, the VEP Director and Coordinator are committed to scheduling semi-annual meetings to review and monitor progress against the goals and ideas set forth in both the DVAAP Plan and Veterans Employment Operational Plan.

Additionally, NSF's *Human Capital Accountability Plan* details NSF's system for thoroughly evaluating all human capital programs at the Foundation. HRM's specific evaluation focus is on mission alignment, effectiveness, and compliance with all legal requirements and external mandates. As an extension of this system, NSF employs a robust internal accountability process that calls for regular review and evaluation of many HRM activities, such as recruitment and learning and development initiatives both in general and specific to the veteran population.

